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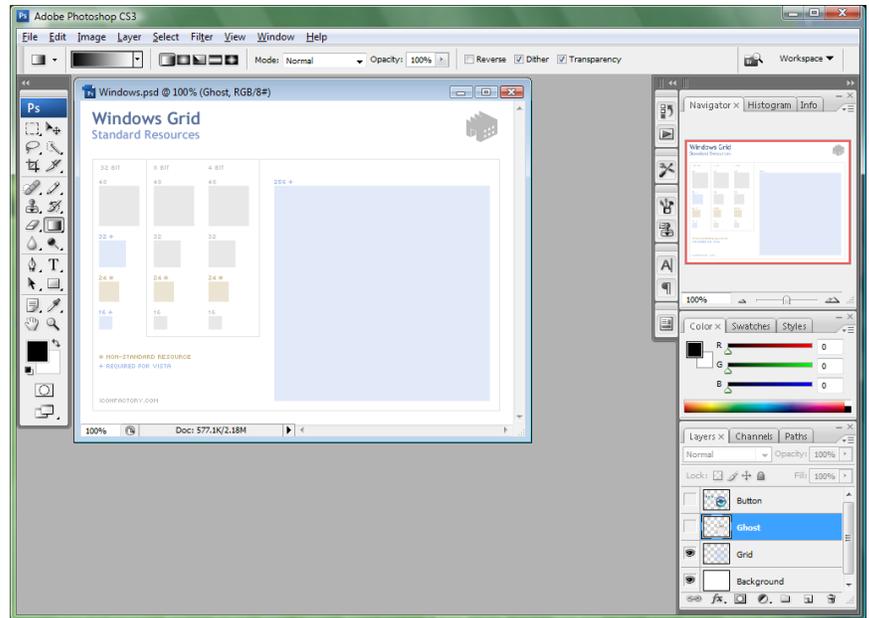
What is IconBuilder?

This step by step guide assumes that you have read, and have a good understanding of the interface and controls of IconBuilder as explained in the IconBuilder User's Guide. If you have not read the guide or are a beginner to IconBuilder, we recommend that you go back at this time and look over the User's Guide before proceeding with this tutorial.

Every icon has to start somewhere, and with IconBuilder, that means creating artwork placed on a layer in Adobe Photoshop to use as a launching pad for the filter. We've created a base grid file for use with IconBuilder that contains the various size templates pre-formatted for you. The file can be found in the "VistaSample" folder of the main IB download. Go ahead and open this file with your copy of Photoshop before proceeding further. When you have completed this tutorial, you can delete the example layers and use the left over grid layer as the base for your own, personal icon building.

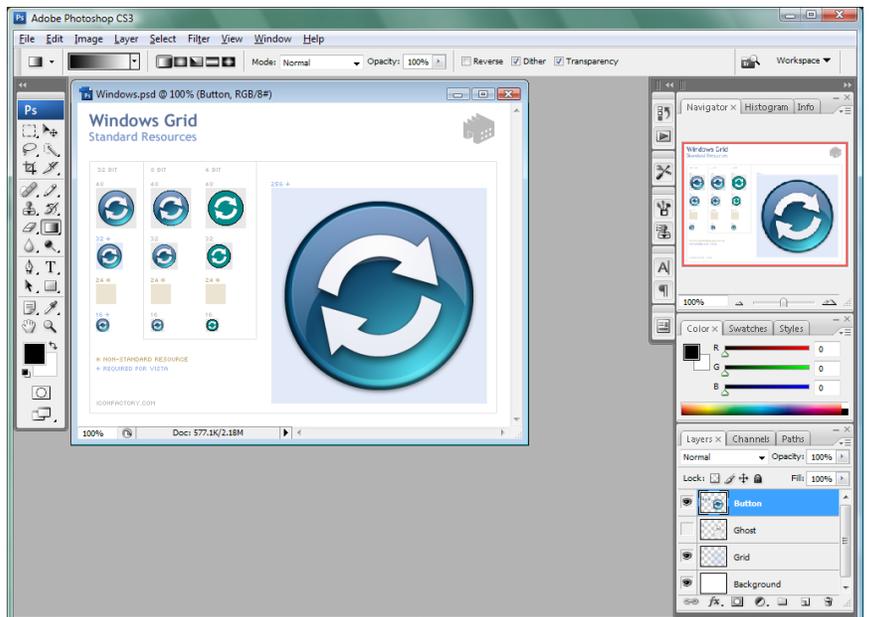
This tutorial is separated into two main parts. The first section demonstrates how to build a modern Windows Vista icon, and the second gives steps on building an icon for the Windows Vista operating system that makes special use of some cool transparent effects. Both sections show slightly different ways to achieve similar results, so you should read them both get a better understanding of how the filter works.

Building a Windows Vista Icon



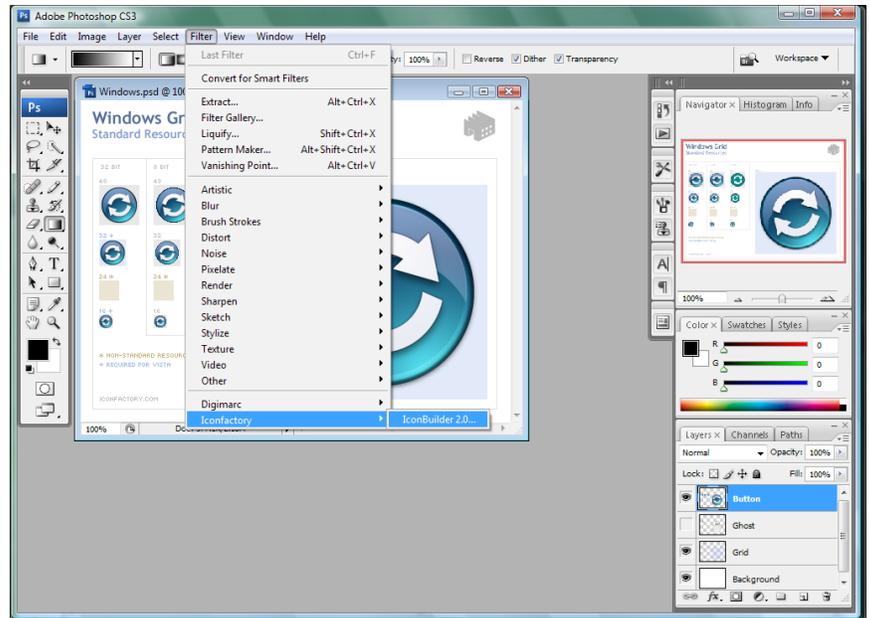
IconBuilder Tip - How you decide to create the base art for your icon is up to you. For these examples, both the Button and the Ghost were created as vector artwork in Adobe Illustrator, rasterized into Photoshop at various sizes and placed in the template file.

1-a) Make sure you've opened the [Windows.psd](#) file from the VistaSample folder to begin. This file has several icon resources pre-formatted and ready to be built into icons. The template layer named "Grid" contains 16x16, 24x24, 32x32, 48x48 and 256x256 pre-sized areas for icon placement.

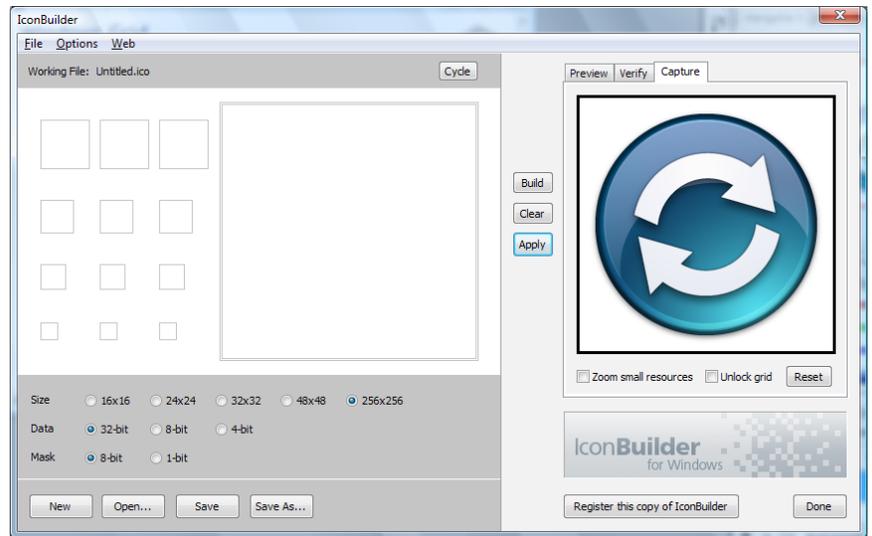


IconBuilder Tip - How to align icons inside the Grid file? In Photoshop, you can use the Magic Wand Tool to select any placement box in the grid file. Copy the artwork from your source file that contains the icon you want to place. Next, with the placement box selected, paste the icon into the selection. The icon will appear on a new layer centered within the selection you just made. Repeat the steps until all resources are copied into the grid file. Finally, you can merge all the layers and you are now ready to use the Filter. This method will guarantee the icon is centered within the space selected, and not off center or aligned to one of the edges.

1-b) Make sure that the "Button" layer is visible and selected from the Layers window. This transparent layer contains image data cropped to the correct sizes. Most Windows Vista icons require four sizes to be built into them, 16x16 pixels, 32x32 pixels, 48x48 pixels and 256x256 pixels. You'll note that we provide you with a 24x24 pixel template as well, although we won't be using that size in this tutorial.

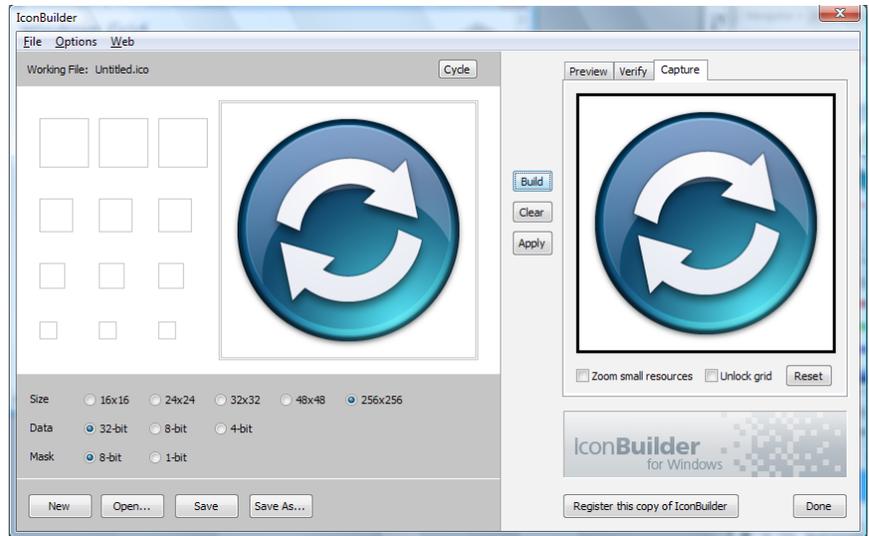


1-c) In order to launch the IconBuilder filter and begin building icons, do the following: **Select Filter > Iconfactory > IconBuilder**



2-a) Once inside the filter, **click** on the **Capture** tab on the upper right of the interface. This will make sure that you are seeing the artwork about to be built into the icon resource grid.

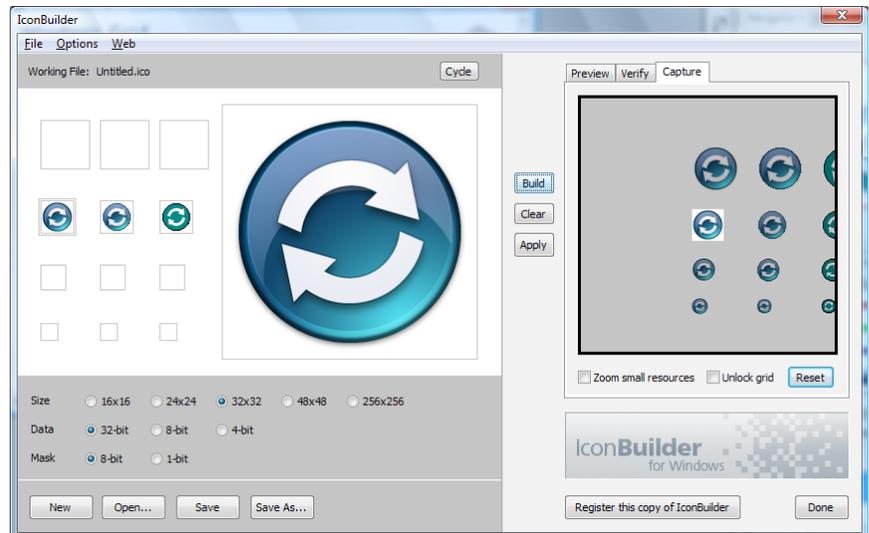
You can jump around in the capture view and see the various sized resources by selecting the different size radio boxes under the working area on the left side of the interface. **Click** the **16x16** radio button to jump to view the **16x16** capture marquee and so on. A quicker way to do this is to simply click directly on the resource square you want to view or edit with your mouse cursor.



IconBuilder Tip - Use the Cycle button above the resource grid to see how your icon will hold up against a variety of desktop colors.

2-b) Select the 256x256 size radio button under the resource grid to select it.

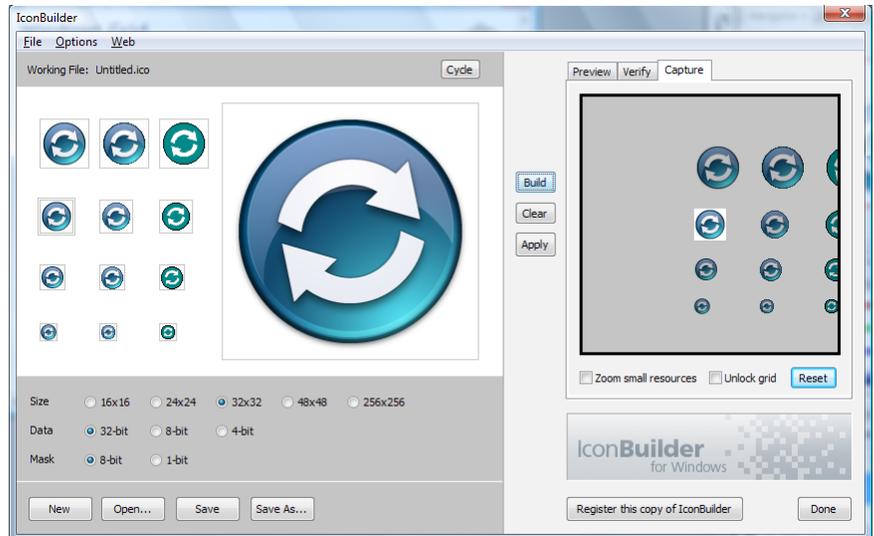
While holding the Shift key down, click on the Build button to instantly add the single 256x256 version of the icon to the resource grid. Holding Shift will always add rows (sizes) of data, and holding Control adds columns (bit-depths) of data.



2-c) Select the 32x32 size radio button under the resource grid to select it.

While holding the Shift key down, click on the QuickBuild button to instantly add all of the 32x32 versions of the icon to the resource grid. Holding Shift will always add rows (sizes) of data, and holding Control adds columns (bit-depths) of data.

Adding Final Resources & Saving

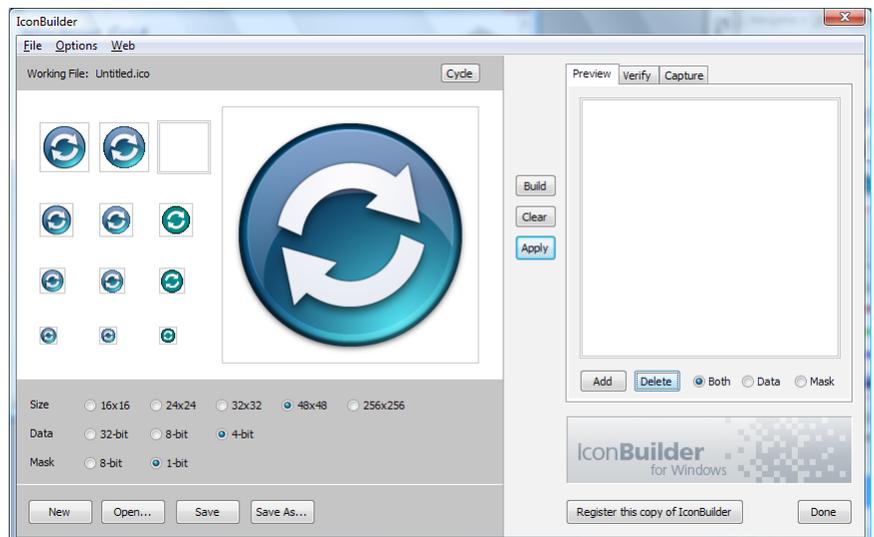


3-a) Adding resources to the icon one at a time is helpful in some circumstances, but it is much quicker to simply place all of the artwork that is needed into the grid layer and then press “Build” one time once the filter has been launched.

To do this, with any individual resource square selected, simply **press** the “Build” button. You will see all of the various sizes and bit depths instantly populate the resource grid.

NOTE: See the important builder tip to the left, and the following step below, about avoiding possible display errors in Windows NT and Windows 2000 prior to saving your icon. If you are not concerned with older versions of Windows, you can skip the next step entirely.

IconBuilder Tip - There is a display bug in certain versions of Windows NT and Windows 2000 that will keep your icon from displaying properly if it contains the 4-bit (16 color), 48x48 resource. For maximum compatibility, we recommend clearing this particular resource from all of your icons prior to saving. In addition, no desktop icon should contain any resources in the 24x24 row. This row is provided for special occasions when programmers might need versions of the icon for the Windows Start Menu. We recommend you DO NOT build any resources into the 24x24 row.

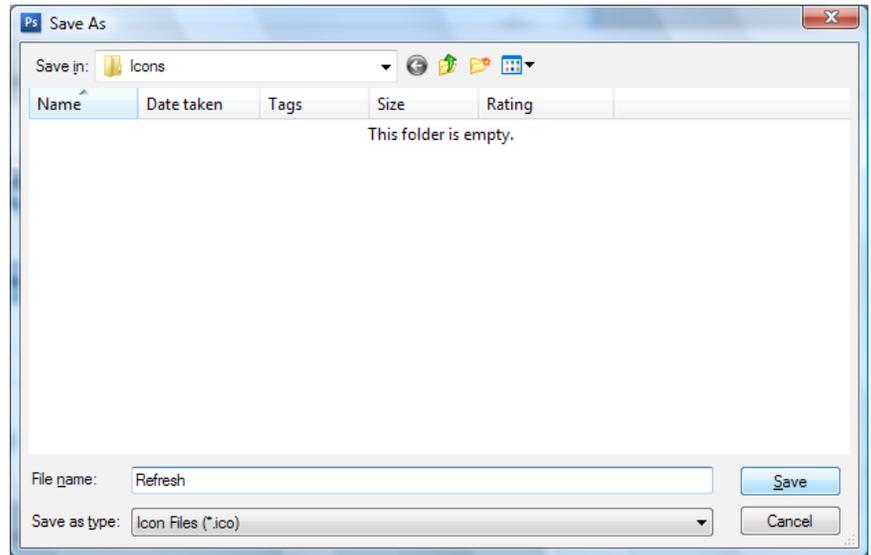


3-b) Click on the 4-bit, 48x48 grid cell (upper right most cell) to select it.

Click on the **Preview** Tab to bring these controls to the foreground. Next **click** the “Delete” button to remove this particular resource from the .ico file.

If you don’t clear this resource, the icon will not display properly on certain versions of Windows. For maximum compatibility, we recommend you omit this size and bit-depth from every icon you plan on creating with IconBuilder. The same also goes for the 24x24 resource row. This row should only be used by designers or programmers that need these specific resources for the Windows Start Menu.

You can easily check to see if an icon is built correctly by reviewing the information displayed under the “Verify” tab. This section contains important information about the icon about to be saved that will save you time and effort. Many of the items listed under the Verify panel apply only to older versions of Windows, so know your target platform before starting construction.



3-c) To save the icon file, simply click on the Save button, name the file and click Save.

Once saved, if you do not see the icon on the desktop, and instead you see a generic document icon, this means there has been a resource saved into the file that Windows is having trouble displaying. Try opening the .ico file inside IconBuilder and manually clearing each of the 24x24 grid cells. Re-save the file and see if this corrects the problem.

NOTE: When viewing the icons on the Windows XP desktop, make sure you have the folder view set to “Tiles”, “Icons” or “List”. The default view of “Thumbnail” and the “Filmstrip” view both display the icon incorrectly.

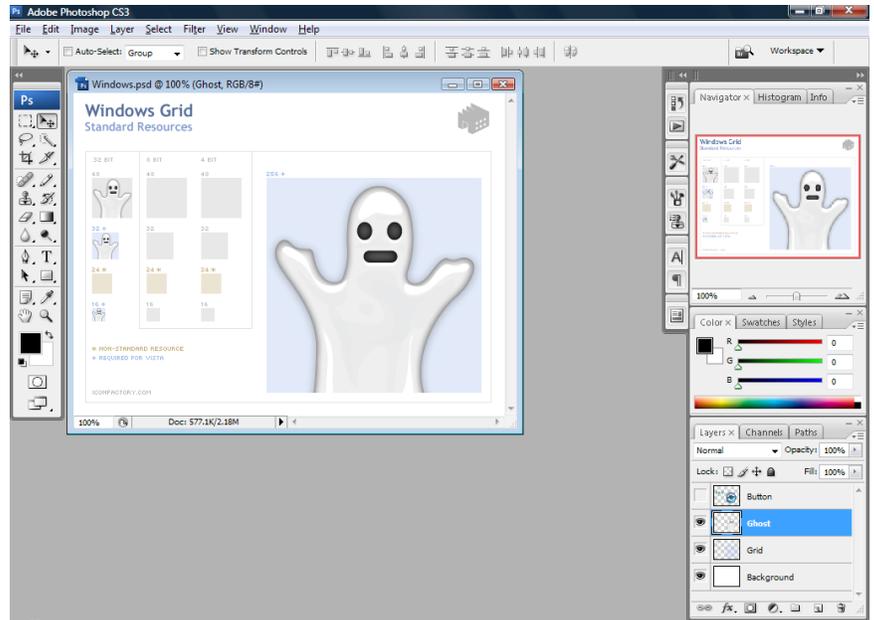
Wrapping Up Section 1

Congratulations, you’ve just constructed your first Windows icon with IconBuilder. The more you work with the filter and explore its controls and layout, the more productive you will become when building icons.

One thing to remember when building icons for the Windows platform with IconBuilder is that there are multiple sizes and depths that need to be added into the .ico file prior to saving. IconBuilder does a good job of translating an icon designed in millions of colors to the lower 4-bit (Win 16 color) depth, but if you are looking for the best results at this bit-depth, we recommend touching up these resources by hand in Photoshop. Coloring pixels by hand will always ensure the best control of how the final resource will look. Many Windows users will see these lower bit-depth icons, so its always a good idea to optimize them the best you can.

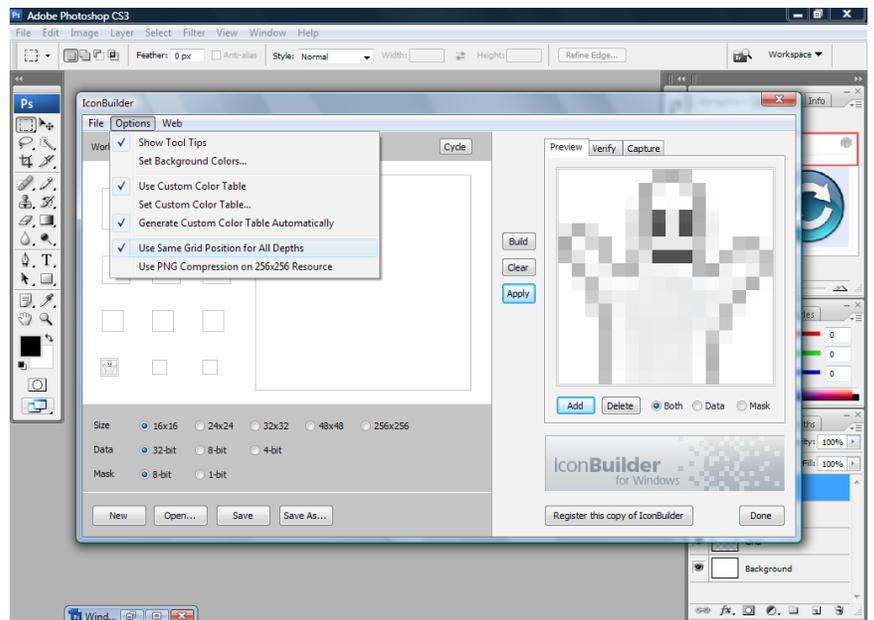
Read on to the next section to learn how to create a similar icon for Windows Vista that makes use of transparent masks.

Adding Icon Transparency

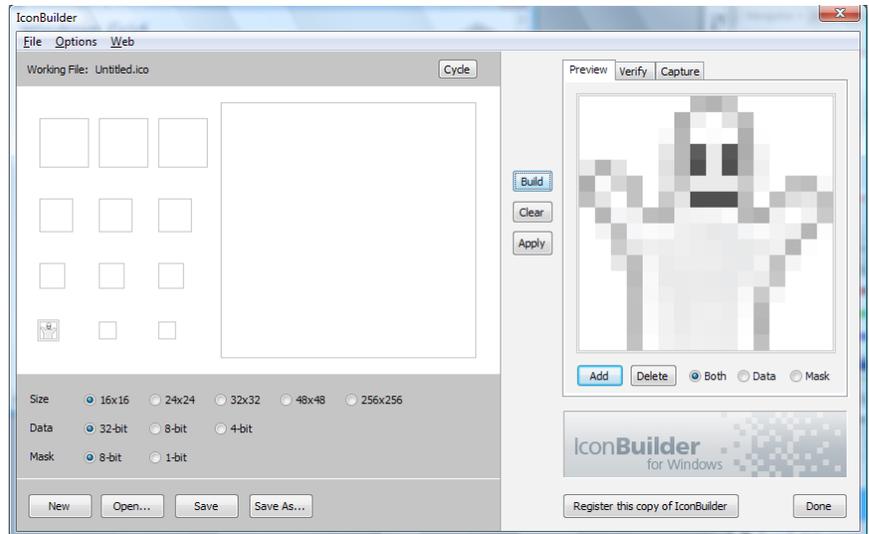


4-a) Open the [Windows.psd](#) file to begin. This time turn OFF the [Button](#) layer and turn ON the [Ghost](#) layer in the [Layers](#) dialog box. Again, no 24x24 resources are used here, so that portion of the template is empty.

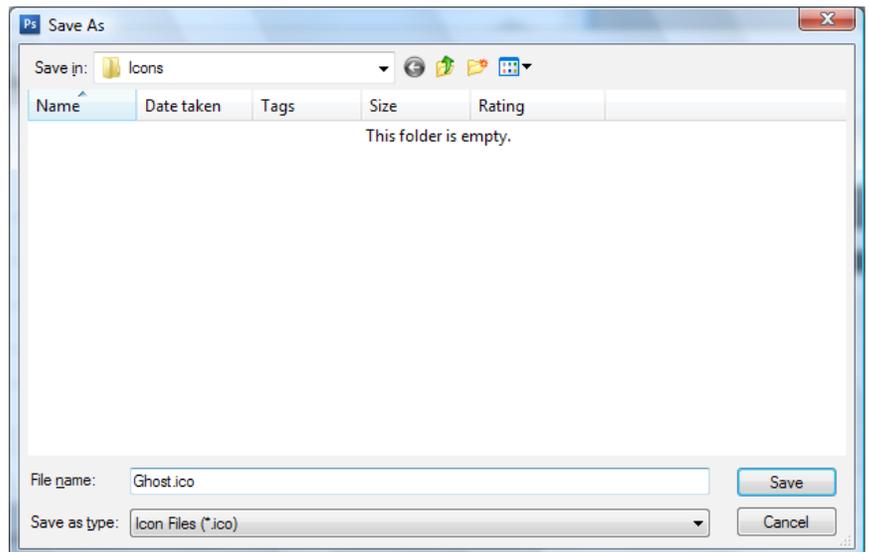
Since we won't be adding any special masking to the 16x16 version of the icon, we're going to build this size resource into the file first.



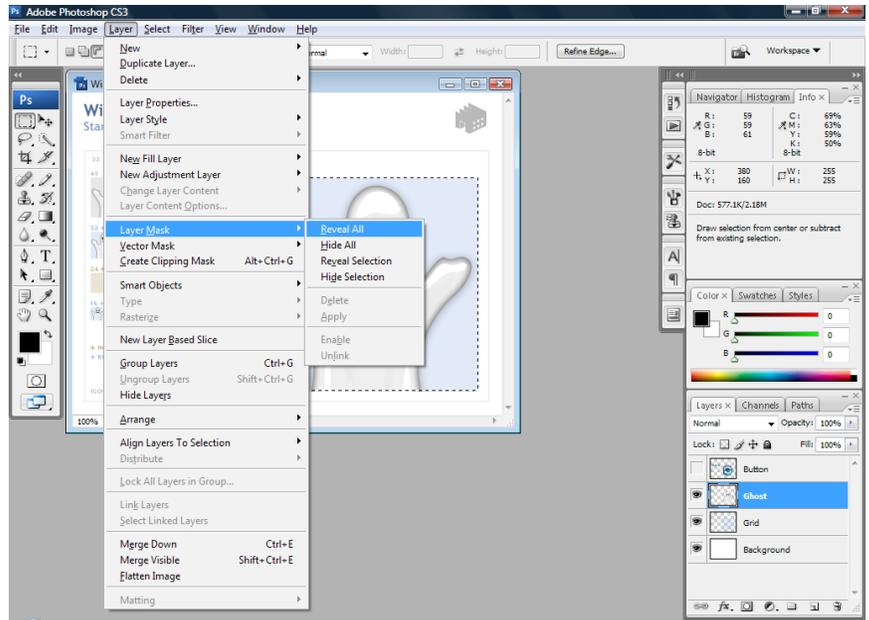
4-b) Select [Filter > Iconfactory > IconBuilder](#) to launch the filter. Click on the "New" button to start a new icon. Since 8-bit and 4-bit resources have not been explicitly created in the Photoshop layer, we can tell IconBuilder to use the same grid position for all depths. Select the [Options > Use Same Grid Position for All Depth](#) menu item and the 32-bit grid positions will be used to build the 8-bit and 4-bit resources. Checking this in the Options dialog enables this preference.



4-c) Click the 16x16, 32-bit cell in the resource grid to select it. Hold the Shift key down and press Build.

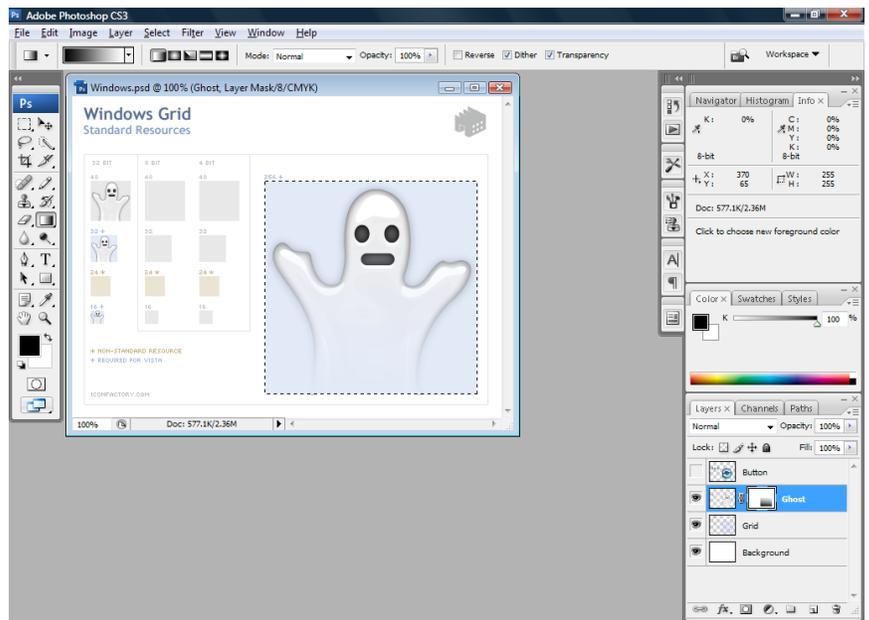


4-d) Click the Save button to bring up the save dialog box. Select the "Untitled" portion of the file name (leave the .ico extension) and rename this "Ghost". Click the Save button and save the icon file to your hard drive. Click the Done button to exit IconBuilder and return to Photoshop.



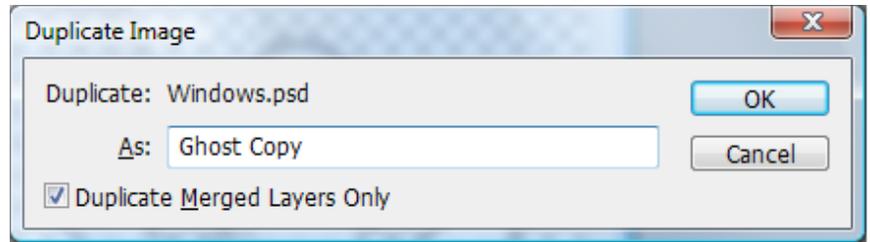
5-a) Using the **Rectangle Marquee tool**, drag a square selection around the 256x256 version of the ghost on the Layer. Select **Layer > Layer Mask > Reveal All**.

IconBuilder Tip - Simply adjusting the opacity settings of a given layer, (or creating a layer mask as we are doing here) won't translate to the icon resource until the layer is duplicated (or the mask is applied). This sets the transparent levels in the image data and allows them to be read by IconBuilder. Remember to turn off any background layers prior to duplicating.

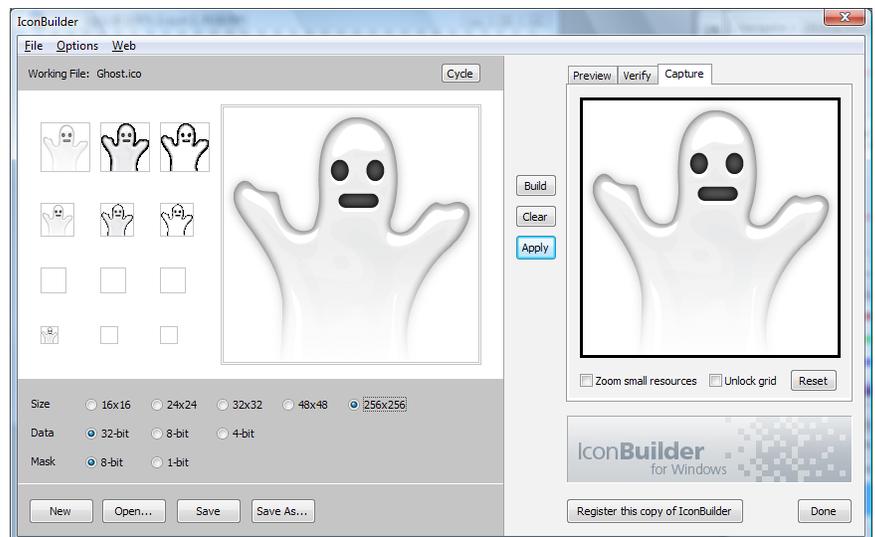


5-b) Using the **Gradient Fill tool**, and with black as the foreground color and white as the background color, drag a selection from the bottom right of the ghost's body to the upper left of his head. This will cause the ghost to "fade" out near the bottom.

Repeat steps 5-a and 5-b, but apply them to the 48x48 and 32x32 versions of the ghost.



5-c) Turn off both the [White Background](#) and [Grid Layer](#) in the [Layers window](#). Make sure that the [Ghost Icon Layer](#) is still highlighted and selected by clicking on the layer's name. Select [Image > Duplicate](#). Select the [Duplicate Merged Layers Only](#) checkbox and select [OK](#).



5-d) Select [Filter > Iconfactory > IconBuilder](#) to launch the filter. Make sure the 256x256, cell in the resource grid is selected. Hold the [Shift key](#) down and press [Build](#).

Next, select the 48x48 grid cell. Press the [Shift key](#) and click [Build](#).

Do the same for the 32x32 grid cell and build that one as well.

5-e) Click the [Save button](#) to save the icon. You can always see which icon you are working on by looking at the name in upp-left corner of the dialog.

Click the [Done button](#) to exit IconBuilder and return to Photoshop.

Wrapping Up Section 2

If you are creating icons for a Windows based software application, be sure to check them out using the “Test” button on the Verify panel. Testing early will always save you potential headaches later on.

Also, keep in mind that the limited nature of the Windows 16 color palette should be taken into account when designing the icon itself. Icons for the Windows platform (even those for the advanced XP and Vista) need to contain 16 color versions to make them backward compatible. Try and design your Win 16 color versions to be as clean and strong as possible.

Be sure to read the IconBuilder User’s Guide PDF file for even more advanced tips and tricks when constructing icons for the Windows platform. You’ll be glad you did.

Creating Web Favorites Icons

Web favorites icons (favicons) are displayed in a web browser’s address bar, next to a web site’s name in the favorites/bookmarks list, and next to a web page’s title. Favicons are basically standard Windows ICO files (16x16 pixels or larger) with one important difference – every favicon is named favicon.ico. Recent versions of many browsers are set up to display favicons by detecting the files in the root directory of a web page.

- To build a favicon, follow the same instructions for creating a Windows ICO file we ran through in section 1.
- Include 32x32 and 16x16 size resources for favicons. The larger version will appear in the Bookmark list and the smaller version appears next to address bar. The art for the 16x16 version should be as crisp and clean as possible since that will be the most viewed size.
- You need to name the file “favicon.ico” every time you save a new favicon file. For this reason, each different favicon file should be stored in a different location to avoid replacement. It is also important to note that only one favicon can be stored in the root directory of a single web site at a time in order for it to be recognized by the browser and displayed properly.

